DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 241 SP 030 618

TITLE Kentucky Career Ladder Commission. Summary Report on the 1986-87 Pilot Program.
INSTITUTION Kentucky Career Ladder Commission.
PUB DATE Nov 87
NOTE 24p.; For related document, see SP 030 617.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Ladders; *Educational Legislation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Incentives; *Program Development; Promotion (Occupational); *Teacher Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Kentucky Career Ladder Project

ABSTRACT

The stated purposes of the Kentucky Career Ladder Project were to: (1) test the feasibility of operating the proposed statewide system to recognize and reward high quality teachers; and (2) provide reliable Kentucky-based information for making sound decisions concerning the future operations of a teacher career incentive progam. This summary report on the 1986-87 pilot program is organized in three sections. Part one presents an historical perspective of the program. The career ladder legislation is discussed and a detailed description is given of the work of the Career Ladder Commission. In part two a summary of findings on the results of the one-year pilot project is outlined. Part three presents four recommendations based on the findings of the commission. (JD)

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KENTUCKY CAREER LADDER COMMISSION

SUMMARY REPORT on the 1986-87 Pilot Program

Submitted
to
GOVERNOR MARTHA LAYNE COLLINS

November 1987

SP030618

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Preface

In the early 80s, concern about the quality of elementary and secondary education in the United States became a popular topic of conversation. The report "A Nation at Risk" demonstrated that our public schools were falling behind other nations in a number of academic areas. We began to focus our attention on our schools in Kentucky. Specifically, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce "Kentuckians for Excellence in Education Task Force" report, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence report "The Path to a Larger Life" and Governor Martha Layne Collins' Council on Educational Reform all said rather similar things about our problems and offered specific proposals for improvement.

In addition, other states around us were heavily involved in school reform and improvements of various kinds. We recognized that new and creative solutions were necessary if we were to be able to retain our excellent teachers and recruit others of like ability and competence. Part of Governor Collins' excellent 1985 educational reform package was the study of a career ladder as a way to recognize and reward excellent teachers. Although a highly controversial subject, the study was conducted and recommended a pilot career ladder project. Due to intensive lobbying of the General Assembly by those groups opposed to the concept and significant 1986-88 budget constraints, the two-year $5 million project envisioned was ultimately funded for 12 months with $2.5 million. This essentially meant that instead of testing a fully developed career ladder plan, the one-year pilot would be primarily a test of teacher performance evaluation instruments.

This report is the formal response of the Career Ladder Comission to Governor Collins, the State Board of Education, the Legislative Research Commission, the Interim Joint Committee on Education and the Citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

By judicious stewardship of our funds, we were able to analyze over one million pieces of data and respond to the ten assertions proposed in the report of the Kentucky Career Ladder Committee. The Commission unanimously agreed that the evaluation system developed can identify teachers who are of high quality and can produce a reasonable range of scores to rank teachers from lowest to highest.

Our report is in two documents--this executive summary and a 600+ page research report, which I commend to you for a fully documented account of this most interesting project.

It has been my privilege to chair both the Career Ladder Committee and the Commission. In both groups we were blessed with members whose extremely diverse backgrounds contributed greatly to the success of this project. On behalf of our Commission, we thank the school districts, the 47 schools, the 337 teachers, the 77 administrators and the 75 observers who participated in this research project. Our thanks also go to Dr. Don Hunter, now Superintendent of Schools in Covington, who served as our Executive Director for the first project. Dr. Stephen K. Miller, Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Louisville, was generously given an 18 month leave to serve as the well qualified Executive Director of this research project. Dr. James R. Craig of the Western Kentucky University College of Education and Behavioral Sciences faculty was on loan to the Commission to serve as our competent Director of Research. To them, our other paid staff and consultants, particularly Dr. Roger Pankratz and his colleagues in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at Western Kentucky University who comprised the research and development teams for the evaluation instruments, and who assisted in the analysis of data and preparation of report documents, goes great credit for making this a professional and practical exercise of true value to the Commonwealth.

Wade Mountz, Chairman

Part I

Conceived in Reform and Guided by Collaboration: A Historical Perspective

The Career Ladder Legislation

The heart of education is still the relationship between the teacher and the student in the classroom. . . The question of improvement of the quality of teaching, of the esteem and the respect for the teaching profession, the inspiration and relationship between teacher and student is at the heart of the educational process and all others must cluster around that idea. (Edward F. Prichard, Jr., "The Path to a Larger Life", A Report of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, 1985, p. 1)

The Kentucky Career Ladder Pilot Program described in this report is a product of the educational reform movement that began in the early 1980s. This movement focused attention on our schools and the teachers who teach our children. The above statement of Mr. Prichard is exemplary of leaders in Kentucky and across the nation who kindled a movement to excellence in elementary and secondary schools. In the summer of 1983, the National Commission for Excellence in Education published their report **A Nation at Risk.** This report told us that our public schools are behind those of other nations and that our graduates have lost their competitive edge in a number of academic areas. In Kentucky, this need to focus our attention on schools and on the teachers who teach in our schools was detailed in the March 1984 Chamber of Commerce **Kentuckians for Excellence in Education Task Force Report,** which included 11 specific recommendations for upgrading public schools in the Commonwealth. This report, developed by prominent business leaders, educators, and lay persons, focused attention on the lack of reward for the teacher.

In addition to the very modest average salary paid Kentucky public school teachers, there is little reward, either financial or societal recognition, for the superior classroom teacher. The current financial compensation system is designed to reward teachers only for years of service and acquisition of college degrees and graduate coursework. The reward system fails to recognize superior instructional performance either through additional financial incentives or societal recognition. In fact, the current system actually encourages the more able and competent teachers to abandon the classroom for the higher salaried administrative and supervisory positions of the public schools. ("An Opportunity for Excellence", Kentuckians for Excellence in Education Task Force, 1984, p. 16)

Based on this identified need, the Task Force in their published report suggested the following recommendation.

In order to encourage the superior teacher to remain in the classroom and to reward exceptional ability, the Kentucky General Assembly should enact a career ladder for public elementary and secondary teachers.(p.34)

The report further suggested several organizational elements, processes for implementation, and criteria for advancement by teachers in a career ladder program.

Regional factors were also a force in the initiation of a pilot of the career ladder system in Kentucky. In 1983 and early 1984, several southern states, e.g., Tennessee and Florida, were developing and testing teacher career ladder programs that offered incentive pay to teachers who demonstrated superior performance. The combined influence of activity at the national level and of in-state reports and initiatives prompted the inclusion of a career ladder plan as part of Governor Martha Layne Collins' educational reform package presented to the 1984 General Assembly. Specifically, KRS 161.22, a component of the Governor's legislative package, included the following:

1. No later than August 15, 1984, the Governor shall appoint a 25-member committee. It is recommended that the Committee be composed of the state superintendent of public instruction or designee and representatives from each of the following groups:

a. Kentucky colleges or universities;

b. The State Board of Education;

c. The Council on Teacher Education and Certification;

d. The Kentucky Education Association;

e. The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce;

f. The Kentucky Parent-Teacher Association;

g. The Kentucky Association of School Administrators;

h. The Kentucky School Boards Association; and

i. Citizens at large.

2. No later than July 1, 1985, the Committee shall:

a. Identify the appropriate steps of a career ladder,

b. Identify the training and competency requirements for each step,

c. Develop a plan for placing currently certified teachers at the appropriate step,

d. Develop a plan for transition from the existing salary schedule to a salary schedule which is compatible with the career ladder, and

e. Select or develop an appropriate evaluation system to measure competency of new teachers and of teachers advancing on the career ladder.

3. Areas of competence specified in subsection (2) of this section shall include, but not be limited to, an understanding of school curriculum, teaching practices and procedures, use of materials, discipline, knowledge of the learning process, and academic content.

4. The Kentucky Department of Education shall be responsible for convening all meetings of the Committee and providing technical assistance for the Committee. The Committee shall complete its work by

July 1, 1985, and shall submit its report to the Governor, State Board of Education, Legislative Research Commission, and the Interim Joint Committee on Education. The Interim Joint Committee on Education shall present the final report to the General Assembly for approval in 1986. A career ladder shall not be implemented until approved by the General Assembly.

The above career ladder legislation was passed by the 1984 Kentucky General Assembly. The facilitation of the work of the Career Ladder Committee became the responsibility of the Department of Education.

The Work of the Career Ladder Committee

By late August of 1984, 25 Career Ladder Committee members had been appointed to include the following:

David Allen *Joyce Childress*

Judith Clabes *Hallie Evans*

Ray Fowler *Judith Gambill*

Wayne Harvey *Marlene Helfrich*

James L. Howard *David Keller*

Clinton D. Kirk *Supt. Alice McDonald*

Cecil Mackey *Jack Moreland*

Wade Mountz *Bill Nallia*

Rafael Nystrand *Roger Pankratz*

James Ratcliffe *Pam Renfro*

William Shadoan *Donald Skeeters*

James Taylor *Corless Wiley*

John Williams

Department of Education staff assigned to facilitate the work of the Committee were:

Dr. Donald B. Hunter, Staff Director

Ms. Rita Lindsey, Staff Assistant

Dr. Jacqueline Cantrell, Evaluation Assistant

Mr. Tom Willis, Finance Assistant

Ms. Dana Hodgkin, Secretary

The initial meeting of the Career Ladder Committee was held in Frankfort on October 26, 1984, in the State Board Room of the Capital Plaza Tower. At this meeting, Governor Martha Layne Collins welcomed the Committee members and challenged them to design a career ladder plan for Kentucky teachers. Dr. Donald Hunter, staff director, introduced staff members from the Department of Education, further delineated the tasks of the Committee, and described Committee operating procedures. Dr. Hunter also provided each Committee member with a series of key documents on career ladders, teacher evaluation, and incentive pay. Each Committee member was asked to review these documents to initiate a common knowledge base for their future work.

The second Career Ladder Committee meeting was held in Louisville on November 29 and 30, 1984. Reports regarding Tennessee's Career Ladder Program and Florida's Master Teacher Program were presented by invited consultants. Staff Director Don Hunter

presented a set of proposed principles to consider in designing a career ladder program.

At this meeting Mr. Wade Mountz and the Honorable William Shadoan were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively. In addition, chairpersons for each of three working subcommittees were elected: Judith Clabes, Finance Committee; David Allen, Operations Committee; and Roger Pankratz, Evaluation Committee.

In the interim between the second and third Committee meetings more than 40,000 questionnaires regarding the 14 proposed Guiding Principles were mailed to Kentucky teachers, administrators, PTA representatives, and interested lay citizens. Nearly 18,000 questionnaires were returned and processed. Respondents rated each of the 14 items on a five-point agree-disagree scale and provided 116 typewritten single-spaced pages of comments. At the third Career Ladder Development Committee meeting held on February 15-17, 1985, in Frankfort, the results of this statewide survey were presented to Committee members. After some discussion, 13 of the principles were passed unanimously by the Committee. Principle 2 passed with three opposing votes. Those 14 adopted Guiding Principles are presented below.

Kentucky Career Ladder Plan Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles of the Kentucky Career Ladder Plan were:

1. The Career Ladder Plan should be designed for the purpose of improving the quality of classroom instruction, increasing the attractiveness of teaching, and encouraging the recognition and retention of high quality teachers.

2. The Career Ladder Plan should maintain the practice of granting tenure to competent teachers, but the plan may include provisions that affect the procedures for granting tenure to teachers in the future.

3. The Career Ladder Plan should not be an alternative to an adequate base salary for all teachers.

4. The Committee shall be guided by the provision of the statute which states, "any currently employed teacher may apply for admission to the professional career ladder program at any time in the future or choose to remain on the current ranking program."

5. The Career Ladder Plan should contain salary levels that are differentiated sufficiently so as to make the attainment of the various levels financially attractive.

6. The Career Ladder Plan should be based upon a continuous, comprehensive evaluation of teacher performance as indicated by multiple sources of information. Classroom performance should be a significant part of the evaluation system.

7. The Career Ladder Plan should provide for evaluation based on indicators associated with effective classroom practices.

8. The Career Ladder Plan should provide for appropriate training of individuals who participate in the evaluation process.

9. The Career Ladder Plan should be open for individuals to progress without regard to arbitrary caps and quotas.

10. The Career Ladder Plan should contain an appeal process that provides prompt and impartial review.

11. The Career Ladder Plan should specify a process for administration, periodic review, and evaluation.

12. Following full implementation, the Career Ladder Plan should provide "transferability" of career status among districts within the state.

13. The Career Ladder Plan should provide for a teacher to move to a lower level either by individual choice or based on unacceptable performance review.

14. Criteria and procedures for advancement on the Career Ladder should be made public. Instruction shall be provided for teachers about these criteria and procedures prior to the implementation of the process.

Following the consideration and adoption of the 14 Guiding Principles, the remainder of the Committee meeting time was devoted to the work of the subcommittees. Members of the subcommittees were:

Evaluation Subcommittee

Roger Pankratz, Chair

Hallie Evans *James Howard*

Jack Moreland *Bill Nallia*

Rafael Nystrand *Pam Renfro*

Donald Skeeters

Operations Subcommittee

David Allen, Chair

Marlene Helfrich *Corless Wiley*

Ova Cecil Mackey

Finance Subcommittee

Judith Clabes, Chair

Judith Gambill *David Keller*

Clinton D. Kirk *James Ratcliffe*

William Shadoan *James Taylor*

From February through April, each subcommittee worked on their own set of tasks, meeting on the average of twice each month. Periodically, Chairman Mountz would convene the total Committee for a short progress report. Two meetings during the second and third weekend of May 1985 were reserved for the purpose of discussing and reaching general agreement on specific elements of the Career Ladder Plan developed by each subcommittee.

The result was a complete draft of a Career Ladder Proposal that was printed by the Kentucky Education Association on four pages of newsprint. More than 70,000 copies were distributed to teachers, administrators, teacher educators, school board members, parents, and interested citizens. The draft of the proposal was then considered by the members of the Kentucky Career Ladder Committee during its final

meeting on June 22, 1985. The final draft of the Committee report was passed by the Committee in a unanimous vote. **The Report of the Kentucky Career Ladder Committee,** more commonly known as the "Blue Book," was submitted by July 1, 1985, to the Governor, State Board of Education, Legislative Research Commission, and the Legislative Joint Interim Committee on Education. The plan included the following elements: (a) steps of the Career Ladder with specification for the evaluation system, (b) and organizational structure with a 22-member governing body--The Career Ladder Commission, (c) operational procedures, (d) Career Ladder salary incentive recommendations, and (e) a Career Ladder Pilot Project.

Specifications for the teacher evaluation system included four areas: (a) instructional performance, (b) professional growth and development, (c) professional leadership and initiative, and (d) student achievement. Student achievement as a measure of teacher performance was a debated issue in the work of the Career Ladder Committee; however, it was included in the Committee's report as a performance area to be included in the teacher evaluation system.

The most important element was the Pilot Project, since the report specified that no career ladder project could be implemented until successfully tested. The description of the proposed Career Ladder Pilot Project specifically presented: (a) ten assertions to be tested, (b) preparation procedures, (c) training and development, (d) an independent team evaluation, (e) a local committee evaluation, (f) work beyond the school year, and (g) instructions for how the conclusions of the study should be reported.

The Work of the Kentucky Career Ladder Commission

The Report of the Kentucky Career Ladder Committee was accepted by the Governor, the State Board of Education, the Legislative Research Commission, and the Joint Interim Committee on Education. In July of 1985, enabling legislation was passed in the extraordinary session of the General Assembly. Section 22 of House Bill 6 reads as follows:

1. No later than the effective date of the Act, the governor shall appoint a twenty-two (22) member commission to oversee the implementation of a pilot program designed to test the feasibility of operating a statewide career ladder system for teachers. It is recommended that the commission be composed of:

(a) Two (2) public school superintendents;

(b) Two (2) public school principals;

(c) Six (6) public school teachers;

(d) Two (2) public school board members; and

(e) Ten (10) representatives of the lay public to be selected from persons who are interested in education but who are not professional educators.

2. The governor shall appoint a member to serve as chairman. The commission shall meet as often as necessary but no fewer than two (2) times per year. The commission members shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses incurred in the

regular business of the commission in accordance with state regulations.

3. The commission shall be responsible for general policy decisions that are required for the pilot program and by September 1, 1988 shall submit a report of the findings of the career ladder program to the governor, the state board of education, the legislative research commission, and the interim joint committee on education.

4. The commission shall be attached to the department of education for administrative purposes. The commission shall employ a research director and other personnel as may be needed. Researchers trained in empirical analysis shall be utilized as necessary.

5. The commission shall initiate a two (2) year pilot program designed to test the feasibility of operating a statewide system to identify and reward excellent teachers and provide reliable information for making decisions on a teacher career incentive program. The pilot program shall be based on the career ladder plan specified in the July, 1985 report to the governor by the Kentucky career ladder committee and shall test the assertions specified in the report.

6. (a) The pilot program shall be conducted in five (5) to ten (10) voluntary local school districts which represent no more than five (5) percent of the state's teachers and are selected to obtain a representative sample according to the following considerations:

1. Geographic distribution;

2. Districts which are below average, average and above average in size;

3. County and independent districts; and

4. Elementary, secondary and special area teachers;

(b) Participating districts shall be selected by July 1, 1986. To prevent the omission of districts which are significantly about average in size, the commission is authorized to select individual schools in those districts in order to maintain a representative sample as set forth in paragraph (a) of this subsection. If there are two (2) or more districts which meet the requirements in paragraph *(a) of the subsection, the participating districts shall be selected by the commission. All information identifying a specific school district shall forever remain confidential. School districts will receive up to twenty thousand dollars ($20,000), depending on the size of the district, to defray administrative costs to participate in the program;*

(c) Teachers will be considered eligible to participate in the pilot program if they have taught seven (7) or more years and have attained Rank II or above as defined by KRS 157.390 (1) (a). Participating teachers shall be selected from those eligible teachers who agree to participate. All information concerning them shall forever remain confidential. Participants will receive equal monetary supplements for their participation in the pilot program regardless of rank and experience. The supplements will not increase the base pay of the teachers but will include teacher retirement system contributions during the pilot year. Supplements of one thousand dollars ($1,000) per participating teacher will be given for pilot-related work during the school year and one thousand dollars ($1,000) per participating teacher for the ten (10) days required past the regular school term.

7. Each participating teacher will be evaluated three (3) times per year by a local committee consisting of the teacher's principal, a state employed full-time evaluator, and a trained evaluator assigned by the department of education. Each participating teacher also will be evaluated three (3) times by an independent committee consisting of three (3) state employed full-time evaluators. The conclusions of the two (2) committees shall be compared to assess the consistency and validity of the evaluation process. All committee members shall be trained and certified.

8. The independent committee shall have access to all data and information considered by the local committee but shall not receive or be knowledgeable of the conclusions or recommendations of the local committee.

9. All information which relates to individual teachers and specific school districts will remain confidential forever and known only to the research staff to be used solely for the defined purposes of the study.

10. The commission shall complete its work by September 1, 1988, and shall submit its report to the governor, state board of education, legislative research commission, and the interim joint committee on education for review and revision. The interim joint committee on education shall present the final report to the general assembly for approval in 1988. A career ladder shall not be implemented until approved by the general assembly.

The time frame of this mandate created a serious financial problem since the General Assembly did not meet again until January of 1986 and, therefore, no funds for development could be appropriated before early spring of 1986.

With the assistance of the Governor's Office, a start-up fund of $300,000 was secured; office space and support were provided by the Department of Education; and by late 1985, a 22-member Commission was appointed by the Governor. Dr. Don Hunter, former staff director for the Career Ladder Development Committee, was employed as the Executive Director along with Ms. Sally Gates as Research Director. Those initially appointed to serve on the Kentucky Career Ladder Commission were:

Wade Mountz, Chairman

Pat Cole *Neill Day*

Hallie Evans *Steven J. Fischer*

Alice Folger *Ray Fowler*

Larry M. Greathouse *Robert Greenwood*

Marlene Helfrich *Lorrel Humber*

Jon Henrikson *J. E. Johnson*

Clinton D. Kirk *Jack Moreland*

Pam Renfro *Jane Scarborough*

Ronald L. Sheets *Ted Smith*

Charles D. Sword *Ronald Walton*

Mattie Wilson

Commission Members who resigned since January 1, 1986:

Lorrel Humber *Mattie Wilson*

Pam Renfro

Commission Members appointed since January 1, 1986:

Dorcas Basone

The first major task of the Commission was to identify and contract with a state agency to design and develop a teacher evaluation system for the Career Ladder Pilot Project. On January 21, 1986, a request for proposals was sent to the deans of education in each of the six state institutions of higher education with graduate programs in teacher education. The request specified both the development products (i.e., instruments, training materials, orientation guides, etc.) and the time frame for delivery of the products. Western Kentucky University was the only university that responded with a proposal and was awarded a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Career Ladder Commission. The basic workscope of the MOA was to design and develop an evaluation system for assessing a teacher's performance as specified for steps 3 and 4 in the "Blue Book." The MOA also included the development of a training program for observers and administrators, the development of accompanying materials for training and certifying observers and administrators, and the development of materials for orienting participating teachers to the Career Ladder Pilot Project.

The second major task of the Commission was the selection of participating districts and the teachers within each district that would be included in the Pilot Program. Specifications for this process were stated in the "Blue Book."

The first meeting of the full Commission was held in Frankfort on January 15, 1986. At this meeting Ms. Sally L. Gates was appointed as the Director of Research. In addition, the Commission instructed Don Hunter, Executive Director, to solicit proposals for a memorandum of agreement from the state universities having graduate programs in education. The Commission also agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Jack Moreland, would serve as an oversight committee for the selection of the districts to participate in the Pilot Project. It was further stipulated that, if the home district of any Ad Hoc Committee member were seeking to participate in the Pilot Project, the Ad Hoc Committee member would refrain from voting.

The second meeting of the full Commission was held in Frankfort on March 31, 1986. At this meeting, Chairman Mountz introduced the Commission staff and Don Hunter, Executive Director, who in turn introduced evaluation system developers from Western. The key item of discussion was the announcement by Chairman Mountz that the most recent version of the 1986-88 biennium budget showed zero funds for the second year of the Pilot Project. This cut in appropriations meant a serious alteration in the design of a planned two-year pilot project. First of all, this meant that the Pilot Project would be able to operate only one year; instrument revision and a second year of data could not be collected and analyzed. Second, it meant that the two-year evaluation cycle specified in the Career Ladder Plan could not be fully tested. Third, and most important, it meant that instead of testing a career ladder plan, the one-year pilot would be primarily a test of teacher performance evaluation instruments.

In April of 1986, the cut in appropriations for the Pilot Project from $5 million to $2.5 million became a reality. In the same

period of time Don Hunter, Executive Director, resigned to accept the position of superintendent of Covington Schools. Both of these events required action by the Career Ladder Commission that would address the needed changes to successfully operate the Pilot Project with a full staff and with less time and funding.

At the third meeting of the Kentucky Career Ladder Commission on June 20, 1986, Dr. Stephen Miller, an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Louisville, was employed as the Executive Director. Under the leadership of Dr. Miller, a staffing organization began to take shape that essentially remained intact throughout the operation of the Pilot Project. Sally Gates became Assistant Director; Dr. James Craig was employed as Director of Research; Martha Dempsey, Sandy Kestner, Carolynne Kleier, and Juanita Gilliam were employed as Site Coordinators; and Jackie Barnes was employed as Special Projects Coordinator. Also at this meeting of the Career Ladder Commission the problems associated with the use of student achievement as a measure of an individual teacher's performance were presented. After some deliberation, a memorandum of agreement was developed and signed between the Commission and Western Kentucky University to conduct a special one-year research project on expected student achievement.

Two special committees were created for the purpose of improving communications and expediting the work of the Commission. The first special group, formed in January of 1986, was the Ad Hoc Committee. This group served to process information and advise the Executive Director regarding issues and concerns in instances where input from the total Commission was not needed but guidance was desired.

The second special committee was the Operations Coordinating Committee consisting of Roger Pankratz (Western Kentucky University), Sandy Gubser (Governor's Office), Ed Ball (KASE), Steve Henderson (Department of Education), and appropriate members of the Commission staff in an ex officio capacity. The purpose of the Operations Coordinating Committee was to serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive Director and to facilitate communications among the various agencies that impacted the operation of the Pilot Project.

The Ad Hoc Committee and the full Commission continued to meet from March 1986 through November 1987 on a needs basis to supervise and monitor the Pilot Program effort and the development of reports associated with this endeavor.

Part II

The Results of a One-Year Pilot Project: A Summary of Findings

Purposes and Processes

The stated purposes of the Kentucky Career Ladder Pilot Project were to:

1. Test the feasibility of operating the proposed statewide system to recognize and reward high quality teachers, and

2. Provide reliable Kentucky based information for making sound decisions concerning the future operations of a teacher career incentive program.

The authority for developing and conducting the Pilot Program was established by House Bill 6, sections 21 and 22, passed in the July 1985 extraordinary session of the General Assembly. Key provisions of sections 21 and 22 were:

- A 22-member commission to oversee the development and implementation of a pilot program
- A two-year pilot program based on the July 1985 report of the Career Ladder Committee
- A comprehensive evaluation system for assessing teacher performance to be developed and readied for implementation in the 1986-87 school term

By late 1985 a Career Ladder Commission was appointed by Governor Martha Layne Collins composed of:

- 2 public school superintendents
- 2 public school principals
- 6 public school teachers
- 2 public school board members
- 10 representatives of the lay public

In addition, an Executive Director and support staff were employed.

In February of 1986 a memorandum of agreement was signed with Western Kentucky University to design and develop an evaluation system that would assess teacher performance as specified in the **Report of the Kentucky Career Ladder Committee**. Development Teams were formed to design teacher assessment instruments for three of the four areas named by the Career Ladder Committee: (a)instructional performance, (b) professional growth and development, and (c) professional leadership and initiative. Because the

researchers stated that it was not currently possible to use student achievement as a valid and reliable direct measure of teacher performance, the Commission, after much deliberation, decided to fund a special research and development project on expected student achievement. The purpose of this project was to determine appropriate strategies for including this performance area in a teacher evaluation system.

Teacher assessment instruments developed for the Pilot Project were:

1. **A Classroom Observation Instrument** designed to measure management of student conduct, organization and development of instruction, presentation of subject matter, and communication

2. **A Teacher Dialogue Instrument** designed to assess the teacher's planning and student evaluation processes

3. **A Goal Setting Instrument** designed to test the teacher's ability to set and achieve goals in Professional Growth and Development and in Professional Leadership and/or Initiative

The two primary sources for the development of specific items of the three instruments were responses to questionnaires from Kentucky teachers and the established and current research on teacher effectiveness.

By August 1986, 337 elementary and secondary teachers from 47 schools in 12 public school districts across the state were selected to participate in the Pilot Project. In addition, 77 administrators (mostly principals) and 75 state-paid observers were selected as data collectors. Administrators were required to undergo 8 1/2 days of training and state observers 8 days of training to use the three teacher assessment instruments. Both groups were required to pass written knowledge and coding accuracy tests before collecting data.

Key processes and events in the Pilot Project relating to the assessment of participating teachers were:

September 1 - October 15, 1986 -- Development and negotiation of 674 professional goal sets by teachers with the assistance of their principals

October 21, 1986 - May 1, 1987 -- Conduct of approximately 4500 classroom observations and 1500 one-hour dialogues by three-member evaluation teams

May 20 - June 15, 1987 -- Review and assessment of teachers' progress toward professional goals by three-member evaluation teams

May 20 - June 15, 1987 -- Meeting of three-member evaluation teams to render a professional judgment of teaching abilities and skills of the participating teachers

June 1 - 15, 1987 -- Conduct of focus group interviews across the state for teachers, administrators, state observers, and career ladder staff

The conduct and assessment of ten days of extended employment for all participating teachers was part of the Pilot Project but separate from the teacher evaluation system. The 12 districts designed plans and reported the results of utilizing their participating teachers for ten days after the close of school.

All data were mailed or hand carried to the career ladder office. By statute, all evaluations remained confidential and no teacher was to be given feedback or to experience any consequence resulting from their assessments in the Pilot Project.

More than one million pieces of data from the Pilot Project were analyzed and subjected to statistical analyses. While the first order of business was to respond to the ten assertions stated in the **Report of the Kentucky Career Ladder Committee,** data analysis will continue for months to come.

Findings of the Pilot Project

Limitations of the Findings

The 1986 General Assembly appropriated only one year of funding for the Pilot Project that was originally designed to test a two-year teacher evaluation cycle. The shortened time frame, the limited funding, and the required specifications of the Pilot Project impose the following limitations on the findings:

1. The feasibility of operating a statewide career ladder program could not be tested. Only elements such as evaluation instruments and processes were tested.

2. Management concerns regarding a statewide system could not be fully addressed with the small sample size of the Pilot Project.

3. The normal consequences of evaluation on teachers and principals were not operating in the Pilot Project due to the required confidentiality of data and the specified plan that all participating teachers would be paid $2000.

4. The specified two-year goal setting/goal attainment process for teachers could not be adequately tested in one year.

5. A one-year Pilot Project did not allow the revision and further testing of newly developed instruments (i.e., problems with the design of the content section of the classroom observation instrument could not be corrected and further tested in one year).

Findings

The data from the Pilot Project suggest that, with further development and testing, it would be possible to produce a professionally and legally defensible Kentucky teacher evaluation system that can identify highly effective teachers. Although some parts of the evaluation instruments did not yield useful data and other parts could not be tested fully, for the most part the data were statistically reliable. This finding suggests that, with modification, the instruments and procedures developed have potential for identifying teachers who demonstrate effective teaching practices. The data also indicate that it is possible to train, in approximately eight days of training, a team of observers to be accurate data collectors using the three instruments designed for the Pilot Project. Furthermore, the data suggest that, given a set of criteria and a preferred method for combining the data from various instruments, there exist the knowledge and expertise within Kentucky to design and develop a valid and reliable evaluation system for teachers.

The data from the Pilot Project provided useful information regarding where and how evaluation instruments should be revised, how assessment processes should be modified, and what new elements should be added to strengthen the evaluation system. The data also raised key issues overlooked in the design of the Pilot Project such as the difference between effective classroom teaching behavior and the overall effective teacher as perceived by administrators, parents, and students. Issues like this are philosophical rather than technical in nature and must be taken into account in the design of a teacher evaluation system.

Data from the **Classroom Observation Instrument** yielded 15 scores that are reflective of effective teaching behavior. Statistical analysis indicated that 14 of the 15 scores were meaningful and interpretable; that is, they were distributed over a reasonable range and appeared to be related to one another. Data from the content portion of the instrument did not yield consistent data and was not used in the assessment of teachers. This section of the instrument which yields an analysis of the content taught will need a redesign and further testing before it can be useful. The 14 effectiveness scores were all designed as ratios with ideal ratios defined. Thus, teachers could be compared in each area to an ideal standard as well as to the scores of a group--an important feature for offering meaningful feedback to teachers.

Data from the **Dialogue Instrument** yielded a score for each of seven question sets, a composite score for planning, a composite score for evaluation, and a composite score for the entire instrument. Like the score from the **Classroom Observation Instrument**, the score from the **Dialogue Instrument** had a reasonable range so that teachers could be ranked and the scores were related to each other; that is, if the teacher was high on one of the seven question sets, it was highly probable he/she was high on the others. Scores for planning and evaluation on the **Dialogue Instrument** were related most to the management scores on the **Classroom Observation Instrument.**

Data from the process of goal setting and judging progress toward goal achievement indicated considerable agreement among observation team members but did not provide a range of scores. At the end of the year 86.9% of the participating teachers were judged to have made adequate progress toward the two-year goals they had developed in the fall of 1986. The judgment of adequate progress was especially confounded by the fact that work on some of the teachers' goals was not to begin until the second year. For a two-year process, a two-year test was needed. Goal set data suggest the possibility that the attainment of professional goals could be considered as a precondition for advancement rather than an assessed criteria for advancement.

Data produced by the **Special Project on Expected Student Achievement** indicate that students, parents, and teachers value a variety of achievement goals in addition to basic mathematics and reading skills. Also, teachers teach for and document the achievement of a variety of learning outcomes not normally assessed on standardized achievement tests. Two broad categories of student achievement outcomes were identified by teachers participating in the Special Project on Expected Achievement: (a) learning outcomes common to all types of students and various disciplines and (b) learning

outcomes unique to a particular discipline area and/or type of student. Data from the expected achievement research effort yielded information suggesting that with continued research and development, over a period of time from two to four years, a method for including expected student achievement as a valid part of a teacher goal setting process could be devised.

At the end of the school year, all data collectors were asked individually to render their professional judgment of the teacher(s) they had observed. Of the 337 participating teachers, 216 (64%) were recommended for advancement on a career ladder by unanimous agreement of all three team members. Fifty-one (15%) were recommended by two of three team members. Thirty-two (9.5%) were **not** recommended by unanimous agreement and 25 (7%) were **not** recommended by two of three team members. There was no decision on 13 teachers because of missing data. It should be noted that there was uanimous agreement among evaluation team members in three of four cases. With reference to the evaluation team members' concept of the ideal teacher, 20% of 337 participant teachers were judged in the top 5%, 61% were judged in the top 10%, and 93% in the top 20%.

Responses to the Ten Assertions

The two stated purposes of the Kentucky Career Ladder Pilot Project were given operational meaning by ten assertions or research questions that were tested. A summary response for each is presented below.

Assertion 1 -- That given a pool of teachers, the evaluation system can identify those who are of high quality

Assertion 2 -- That the evaluation system can produce a reasonable range of ranking of teachers from lowest to highest

The evaluation system can identify the teachers who are of high quality and can produce a reasonable range of scores to rank teachers from lowest to highest. High quality was operationally defined as those teachers demonstrating behaviors judged highly effective by the teaching profession and by research to produce student learning. Scores produced by the evaluation instruments were combined and processed using three different methods: (a)**a filter method** requiring a teacher to meet a set standard on each of 14 performance scores for advancement; (b) **a composite method** requiring teachers to have a set overall average of performance scores; and (c) **a combination method,** a hybrid of methods #1 and #2. All three methods produced a reasonable range of ranking of teachers. The appropriate method to use in a career ladder program is a matter of philosophical stance and of professional preference.

Assertion 3 -- That there will be a significant correlation between the committee evaluation and the independent evaluation

The data indicate that in the Pilot Project, the two evaluation teams--the administrator/peer teacher/state observer team and the team of three state observers--are within an acceptable range of consistency in their coding and assessment of the relevant teacher behaviors. This assertion was tested

examining the intercorrelation of scores of different evaluators observing the same teachers, and by examining the mean differences of team scores evaluating the same teacher. In general, the three team member's scores were correlated and the two team scores were found **not** different using tests of statistical significance.

Assertion 4 -- That a school system can effectively utilize those teachers who have been identified as high quality for ten (10) additional work days to further its educational goals

All 12 districts developed plans in accordance with the required format. With few exceptions, the districts were able to implement their extended employment plans and produce quality products that were judged useful to the district, the school, and/or the instructional programs of the schools. Factors that appeared to affect the degree to which teachers were profitably utilized were local leadership and the degree of local support.

Assertion 5 -- That it is reasonable to expect principals to perform the required tasks of the career ladder evaluation system

Overall, the administrators in the Pilot Project were able to complete the evaluation tasks for teachers assigned to them--that is, they were able to be trained and, within acceptable limits, to collect data accurately. However, they were not always able to complete their evaluation assignments on schedule even though usually they had just three to five teachers assigned to them. The extra workload for administrators, particularly principals, was a problem. Thus, it does not appear feasible to expect a principal to properly conduct the various activities of a statewide evaluation system without a reassignment of workloads and additional help for administrative duties presently assigned to the principal.

Assertion 6 -- That the principals and other evaluators can be trained in a reasonable length of time to adequately utilize the career ladder evaluation procedures and instruments

It was possible to train administrators in 8 1/2 days and state observers in 8 days to accurately use the three evaluation instruments employed in the Pilot Project. From a technical perspective, this training time is very reasonable considering the complexity of the instruments. However, many administrators reported that 8 1/2 days away from school for training was too much time. While it is possible to design training to minimize the time away from school, it would be difficult to reduce the actual hours needed for learning to accurately use the instruments without seriously compromising the evaluation system.

Assertion 7 -- That the evaluation system used by the committee, as defined in the career ladder plan, can produce teacher evaluations that are valid, reliable, and free from personal and political bias

From an examination of the processes used in the Pilot Project to develop the evaluation instruments and of the data collected on the 337 participating teachers, it is safe to conclude the following:

1. There is content validity within the **Classroom Observation** and **Dialogue Instruments** based on the research literature and the statewide professional judgment verification process.

2. The training was effective in producing observers who can observe a classroom and dialogue a teacher reliably.

3. Individual differences in observations and dialogues did not systematically bias the data.

4. A system for evaluating teachers will reduce the likelihood of making errors in judging teacher performance over the course of a school year if the scores of three observers are aggregated rather than using each individual rating.

5. No evidence of personal and political bias was found to be operational in the Pilot Project.

Assertion 8 -- That there exists a pool of qualified persons who are willing and can be trained to serve as career ladder evaluators along with the principal

A pool of qualified persons who are willing and can be trained to be reliable observers exists. The ultimate size of this pool is unknown from the data collected in the Pilot Project. The Commission staff experienced few problems recruiting and selecting the 75 state observers used as data collectors. A number of the state observers indicated they could assess as many as 35-40 teachers if employed on a full-time basis. Few practicing teachers applied as part-time observers of their peers. Time commitments and teaching responsibilities were the most frequent reasons given for not wanting to serve as state observers. Arrangements for substitutes and/or released time for teachers will be needed before the assertion that there exists a pool of practicing teachers willing to observe/evaluate their peers can be fully tested.

Assertion 9 -- That a system can be created and operated to record and retrieve the necessary information

The system to collect, transmit, record, and retrieve the relevant data for the Pilot Project was created and is operating. The system consisted of several components each of which was related to the type and source of data being collected. Data recording, retrieval, and processing procedures were efficiently and effectively developed and used in the Pilot Project with the assistance of available computer technology. While the researchers in the Pilot Project do not foresee any major problems in developing a statewide system, whether such a system could be developed and efficiently used was not tested.

Assertion 10 -- That the evaluation system can complement and strengthen the local teacher evaluation process

Administrators in the Pilot Project perceived that the evaluation system used can, and in some instances will, complement and strengthen their district's local teacher evaluation process. The greatest concern expressed by most administrators was having enough staff and enough time to implement whatever evaluation system is being used. If development and testing of the instruments used in the Pilot Project were to continue, districts through the work of their local evaluation committees could adopt one of two possible strategies: (a) adapt one or more instruments for use in the local system or (b) adapt elements of instruments for use in the local system.

Summary Data from Focus Group Interviews

General statements and impressions of their experiences in the Pilot Project were collected at the end of the project from participating teachers, administrators, and state observers. These were collected in each district using a focus group interview technique. The following statements, not ordered in any particular manner, summarize the general impressions of the Pilot Project participants:

1. Teachers generally felt that the Pilot Project had been a professionally rewarding experience even though the amount of work involved was more than they expected.

2. Many teachers reported they did not like or understand the rationale for not receiving feedback on their performance.

3. A number of administrators said they did not like being out of their school for training as much as the project required. Also, they reported not liking the fact that they could not give feedback to their teachers following the observations and dialogues.

4. Both the administrators and the state observers believed there were important behaviors not addressed on the Classroom Observation Instrument. Many of these behaviors were related to affective student/teacher interaction.

5. Overall, teachers felt that the presence of a state observer or an administrator, after the first observation, had little effect on them or their students.

6. The teachers generally felt that the administrators, and especially state observers, needed more information about the lesson they were observing in order to put the lesson in proper perspective and to be better able to understand the lesson they were observing.

7. Many teachers reported they did not understand how the lists of goals and activities had been initially generated and how the weights attached to the activities had been assigned.

8. State observers reported relatively little trouble conducting the goal set reviews other than encountering missing materials and/or inadequately documented goals and activities. Administrators did not report any problems other than having enough time to review the materials.

9. Participating teachers reported that the state observers and administrators generally followed the correct observation and dialogue procedures as they, the teachers, understood them.

10. Teachers and administrators expressed a need to define student achievement more broadly than what is measured by standardized test scores.

Part III

Commission Action and Recommendations

The Kentucky Career Ladder Commission met on November 7, 1987, and accepted two staff reports as valid accounts and descriptions of the work of the Career Ladder Commission, fulfilling the requirements of House Bill 6 enacted July 1985. These were (a) The Summary Report of the 1986-87 Pilot Program and (b) The Research Report of the 1986-87 Pilot Program.

Based on the findings in these two reports the Career Ladder Commission makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That the Department of Education assume the responsibility for the continuation of the research and development effort begun by the Career Ladder Commission and that the Department initiate a program of further development and testing of the teacher evaluation process (i.e., observation, dialogue, goal setting, expected student outcomes) designed in the Pilot Program for the purpose of instructional improvement and the professional development of teachers.

Recommendation 2

That the Department of Education make available to Kentucky school districts a set of revised teacher evaluation processes and procedures designed in the Career Ladder Pilot for the districts' consideration as evaluation components in their local teacher evaluation programs. It is futher recommended that the Department of Education provide appropriate training to districts for the implementation and use of these evaluation processes and procedures.

Recommendation 3

That the Kentucky General Assembly provide funding through the Department of Education for the continued research and development of teacher assessment processes (i.e., observations, dialogue, goal setting, expected student outcomes) for the purpose of instructional improvement and the professional development of Kentucky teachers.

Recommendation 4

That the Kentucky General Assembly consider the enactment of enabling legislation implemented through the Department of Education to:

A. establish and fund a career ladder demonstration pilot in three school districts;

B. authorize the selection of the school districts to be based on the following criteria:

1. one school district in which the level of income, base of economic and tax support, and level of student achievement on test scores are consistently low;

2. one school district in which the level of income, base of economics and tax support, and level of student achievement on test scores are consistently high;

3. one inner city school district in which complex social issues continue to be detrimental to the relationship between teacher and student, quality of teaching, and the esteem and respect for the teaching profession;

4. priority consideration should be given to the twelve districts who participated in the Pilot Program;

5. districts selected for participation should have the approval of the local board and a majority of the teachers;

C. authorize the career ladder demonstration pilot to continue in the three selected school districts for a four-year period;

D. authorize the differential salary schedules, in addition to the base salaries of all teachers, to be utilized in the three selected school districts;

E. require the career ladder demonstration pilot to utilize the teacher evaluation processes and career ladder system elements developed in the original pilot of the Kentucky Career Ladder Commission and to refine such evaluation as appropriate through further research and development efforts within the Kentucky Department of Education.